

----- ST REPORT INTERNATIONAL ONLINE MAGAZINE -----
"The Original 16/32bit Online Magazine"
from
STR Publishing Inc.
"

February 22, 1991

No.7.08

STReport International Online Magazineâ €
Post Office Box 6672
Jacksonville, Florida
32205 ~ 6672

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> The Editor's Podiumâ €

Recently, a banner read; "ATARI DEALERS UPSET OVER STE MASS MARKETING PLANS." First, let's not confuse the subject here, (a) mass marketing of "STE" means the 1040STe computers will be mass marketed through the chains, (b) mass distribution means the remainder of all the products EXCEPT the TT030 line will be available through National Distributors. Now, with that made clear.. let's proceed. One cannot help but wonder if that's indicative of all dealers, the USA, the world or the UNIVERSE!

Unfortunately, the statement is offensively misleading in a number of ways. It does not illustrate how many dealers are actually remaining throughout the USA nor does it indicate the true number of those left who are actually "upset". However, judging by information received from our readers about the 'proximity' of a "local dealer" they each enjoy, it appears the squawk comes mainly from dealers who can easily be counted on one or two fingers. Rest assured my friends, one may firmly believe the new aggressive marketing plans Atari has announced and implemented are excellent and will provide the much needed vehicle to once again place Atari Computers in the spotlight of the nation's computing consumers.

Mass distribution of all but the TT030 is the best move Atari has made since its disastrous decision to yield to the special interests of dealers as the majority of us know occurred a couple of years ago. That move almost finished the entire ballgame for everyone. Eventually, even the most enthusiastic of dealers began dropping out of the network because they could not measure up to the buying power and levels of product consumption the mass marketers had previously generated for Atari. They simply couldn't continue to meet the criteria established by them and needed by Atari to maintain a similar level of national product distribution and consumption. The number of dealers nation-wide has continually dwindled since then, creating an absolutely wonderful situation for the sparse few dealers who are left.

There is no doubt that those making the loudest of negative noises.... would simply love to corner the market. Perhaps they'd even try to hamper and impede the aggressive mass marketing agreements Atari has entered into and begun. They are, unfortunately, not satisfied with having preferential treatment under the Strategic Partner Program and exclusivity as far as the TT030 is concerned. They still unfortunately, covet it all. Pity they didn't learn anything from the past. With the economy as it is, it's now a buyer's market and will be for some time to come. Thank goodness! The consumers will ultimately have the final say. They'll buy where they wish, when they wish and not where a "select few" dealers would like to unfairly coerce them to buy.

The amount of positively enthusiastic and supportive mail, (e-mail & hard copy), STReport has been receiving concerning Atari's mass distribution program have been overwhelmingly in favor of Atari's current and very correct course of action. If an iota of a possibility existed of Atari paying any attention to a recent loud complaint concerning the mass market approach, the result would undoubtedly be a denunciation from the userbase directed at first the complainant and then unfortunately, Atari. According to information acquired through recent conversations with a number of folks at Atari, "Atari is not entertaining any thoughts of yielding to the self serving wishes of a loud minority when the future of so many current and future enthusiastic supporters, worldwide, are truly at stake."

The bottom line is;

Atari's plans are constructively precise and assuring. The much anticipated USA market penetration, lateral growth, (increased demand for software & hardware) and accompanying benefits, (specialized support, usergroup growth), will definitely be achieved with Atari's announced and implemented mass distribution and aggressive marketing plan.

Now the plea, to all interested parties; dealers, developers and users please.... PLEASE drop a note to Greg Pratt, Bob Brodie or Bill Rehbock at Atari advising them of your support for the current revitalization plans and fully encourage their continued superb efforts.

Thank you for your strong support!

Ralph.....

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> STReport's Staff The regulars and this week's contributors!
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> A "Quotable Quote"â ¢
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"IF ANY OF YOU NEED LESSONS IN THE GAME "RED DOG"....
PLEASE, CONTACT RON LUKS"

Sam Tramiel

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> SAM TRAMIEL ONLINE! STR Featureâ € Sam Tramiel Conference on CompuServe
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from the COMPUSERVE ELECTRONIC CONVENTION CENTER....

THE ATARINET PRESENTS SAM TRAMIEL IN CONFERENCE
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Your moderator is Sysop; Ron Luks JOB 4

(Sysop Ron Luks)

Welcome to the SAM TRAMIEL Conference on CompuServe. To repeat what most of you already have heard, there will be NO CompuServe connect charges during this CO.

Before we begin the Question and Answer session, I'd like to remind you that this will be a moderated CO. To ask Sam a question, you will be required to enter the "/QUE" command. When it is your turn, the system software will signal you to ask your question. You may then type in your question, OR, to save time, you may pre-type your question into the system BUFFER with the /BUFFER EDIT command and then transmit the buffer with the /BUFFER SEND command when your turn is called.

In order to keep things moving, please ask only ONE QUESTION per turn. This CO is planned to be 2 hours in length. If you do not get a chance to ask SAM all your questions, you may send them via ELECTRONIC MAIL after the CO to BOB BRODIE; 70007,32400. And he will pass them along to SAM who has promised to reply to all of them. [Thanks Sam!]

Now, I would like to welcome Sam Tramiel, the president of ATARI CORP. We would like to give Sam (and his team) the opportunity to make a short opening statement, then open the floor to questions.

(Sysop Ron Luks)

Okay Sam. The floor is yours.

(Sam Tramiel)

Hi everybody, it's a pleasure being here with you on Compuserve.

(Sam Tramiel)

If any of you need lessons in the game "Red Dog" please contact Ron Luks :-> I'll be happy to answer almost any question. Let's begin.

(Sysop Ron Luks)

(ouch! That cost me)

(Sysop Ron Luks)
go ahead, Bruce Barr.

(Bruce Barr)
Sorry, I was in the editor. As a business user I must say first, I love the Portfolio. It has become an indispensible part of my work day. However, I find that your dealer network has no interest in me as a business user. At least that is the impression I get when I walk in and they are too busy copying a game for someone else to look up and acknowledge me. Are there plans to move into the business market? Even the Musician market is non-existent outside of NY and possibly LA.

(Sam Tramiel)
First of all, no dealer should be copying games for anybody. We have to stop all piracy and you guys out there have got to scream at people who are doing this. Portfolio is my everyday machine and I equally love it. Your dealer should be able to help you. If he cannot, please call us here at Atari, or leave EMAIL to Bob Brodie at 70007,3240.

(Bruce Barr)
I can't actually say WHAT they were doing, just ignoring me...

(Sam Tramiel)
We have addressed the business market in our more recent ads. i.e. bundof PC card drive & ram card w/Portfolio.

(STATUS (VA Beach))
Can you please tell us when the TT/030 system be READILY available for sale in the U.S. (Class B acceptance). Secondly, will it come with UNIX operating system, including X-Windows?

(Sam Tramiel)
I cannot exactly tell you when the TT030 will be available Class B. My educated guess is sometime in March.

STATUS (VA Beach))
(1991?)

(Sam Tramiel)
Unix will be shown on March 13 at the Hanover faire in Germany. It will be Unix System V.4, X-windows, Motif, and a front-end named "Wish" and I'll ignore the "1991" comment.

STReport [Ralph]
Good evening Mr. Tramiel. If you please, two questions;
Since the most recent online conferences, there seems to be a great deal of confusion pertaining to the directions in which Atari is going in reference to mass marketing and national distribution. Is it safe to say the 1040STe will go into mass marketing ie; K-Mart etc.. and the remainder of product except the TT030 will be available through national wholesale distribution organizations? The Portfolio is terrific! I use the daylight's outta mine, is there any truth at all to the rumor that a 286-80col version is to debut in March?

(Sam Tramiel)
We think that we have a very clear marketing direction. We are trying to sell personal computers to people at the best possible price. Of course, we consider back-up and service by our dealers, and we want to develop a good dealer network. We do plan to sell customers like Circuit City [god

willing]. We have no plans at present to sell at K-Mart. The TT030 will definitely be sold through qualified dealers who can explain advanced computer use. I cannot make any projections on new product from a hardware point of view, but we are definitely working on new portable machines. If I announce one now, and don't deliver on time, you'll kill me in ST-Report.

(Garth Wood)

Sir:

Does Atari plan to make a Parallel Transfer Protocol available for users of the Portfolio who own an ST but NOT a PC-compatible? It would be VERY nice to have such a beast, and I'm sure owners of both (such as myself) would be willing to pay for it. At present, I have to beg, borrow or steal a PC to transfer textfiles onto disk and then to my ST, and I DON'T want to spend \$119.00 (CDN) to buy the Serial Adapter, too. Thanks in advance for your reply.

(Sam Tramiel)

I use a serial port to transfer data back and forth to my ST. At present we have no plans to support the Parallel adapter with the ST.

Sysop (Ron Luks)

Sam-- Any plans for making an ST version of the CARD READER device?

(Sam Tramiel)

I will track down why the serial adapter is so expensive in Canada. As a Canadian, we cannot rip off you Canucks. We have no plans at present for this. Thanks for the idea.

(Bobby Dyer)

Hello Mr. Tramiel--thanks again for answering my letter concerning the new Atari 16-bit home system. I also received letters from 2 other depts. at Atari as well; I am glad to see Atari values their customers. Can you tell us anything about the new system tonight? Thank you.

(Sam Tramiel)

I assume that you are talking about Panther. This is a 68000 running at 16MHz game machine which we will probably ship in early 1992. Software is now being written for the Panther. It will even allow for Lynx to network with some games.

(Walter Daniel)

What is the future of the Portfolio line? Will there be new machines and new software? Will they continue to be 8088 based (Walter Daniel) or use the 68000? Will they be Dos compatible or license DOS in the future? (Walter Daniel) I'd like to follow up after your response.

(Sam Tramiel)

We plan to make more applications software and peripherals available on the Portfolio. We are definitely planning to make small notebook-like machines which will be 68000 ST-based. As far as the Intel family is concerned, I have no comment at present, except that we will continue to support the Portfolio.

(Walter Daniel)

Gathering info from the Portfolio forum, users would like to see a 80x25 screen most of all. Other possibilities would be more memory and use of standard RAM cards. Would this be along your lines?

(Sam Tramiel)

I agree that this would be a great feature, except in the Portfolio display area, 80x25 is too small for an old man like me, and many other the 40-something age group.

(Ken Helms)

Thanks Ron and welcome Mr. Tramiel.

What was the main reason for putting the ST product line into distribution? The bulk of Atari's STs have always gone to Europe. Has production increased or has sales in Europe dropped off or just not enough dealers left in USA? Does this affect Atari's policy on no ST mail orders. Will the STE be bundled with any software?

(Sam Tramiel)

The reason why we have been short of STs in the US goes back to the RAM shortage days. Today, RAM is not in short supply, so we are trying to grow our US distribution. We are selling through some regional distributors and directly to dealers. We do not condone mail-order because of the lack of follow-up for our users. We are doing STE bundles at present, please go to your local dealer for more info, or call Bob Brodie at (408) 745-2052.

(Jerry Cross (GAG))

Can you give some details of what you are looking for in "Key Dealers". Will there be more than one in certain cities (such as Detroit)? I believe this system will really upset some of the long time Atari dealers who have supported Atari but now find themselves as "second class" dealers.

(Sam Tramiel)

We plan to support our long-time dealers even more than we have in the past. Greg Pratt, who was our corporate CFO, is now President of Atari US, and is making a big effort to build up a team to support all of our dealers. We are looking for dealers who really understand our products and who will be there to support you.

(Steve Ward)

Good Evening Mr. Tramiel, a short question about the future of the Atari computer as a viable home office computer. I currently have a Mega 2 and Mega 4. I would consider buying a TT030, EXCEPT for the apparent lack of adequate software and the disappearing products (UltraScript, etc). Finally, when will Atari join the real world and offer currently offered hardware such as a 1.44 MB drive and a network card?

(Sam Tramiel)

To answer the first of your short questions :->, we feel that there is terrific software available for home office use. Calamus is but one example. Please let me know what you can't get, and need. 2nd question, QMS/Imagen is the supplier of Ultrascript. They have gone through a reorganization and I'm quite sure they will re-release Ultrascript. We are working with them closely on a number of products. Your last question, we are planning a 1.44 mb drive in the future and will also make this available as an upgrade on TTs and Mega STEs. You can, of course, plug in a network card on a TT or Mega STE as they both support VME.

(Michael Mortilla)

I represent myself and my company, MIDI-Life Crisis, which creates (Michael Mortilla) music for film, theatre and dance using a 1040 STf (4 meg). My questions are mainly regarding the STE:

1-I've heard of TOS 1.6 bugs (improper screen re-writes, ST software incompatibility, unexplained crashes, etc) and wonder what has Atari done

and will do to remedy this?

2-Along these lines, is this the reason the price of the STE was recently reduced?

3-These issues become **very** important since Atari dealers seem to be "dropping like flies" in this country and the nearest service center to Santa Barbara, CA, is nearly three hours away! We die hards are trying to hang in there, but most of my fellow musicians are getting macs because of poor support locally. Is Atari planning to increase activity in the US market?

(Sam Tramiel)

The current version of TOS in the 1040STE is v1.62, which fixes many of the problems with v1.6. There is a file, STEFIX.PRG, which patches v 1.6 for these problems. Most of the incompatibilities are with games, which break TOS rules. This is not the reason why the STE is priced the way it is. We are trying to compete in the market. As I mentioned before, we are planning to expand our dealer base in the US, and have hired very qualified personel to accomplish this. If any of you out there have suggestions for dealers who want to make money in the long term, please call Greg Pratt at 408-745-2349 and give him the name and address of such dealers.

(David Sheafer)

I am still using an Atari 8 bit system a 130xe with hard drive, 2400 baud modemetc, 2 floppy drives. This system supports most of my needs but I really would like to see some more commercial software for the 8 bit system. Will this happen at all? ALSO is there any plans for KLAX for the Atari 7800?

(Sam Tramiel)

I appreciate that you love your Atari 8-bit system. Unfortunately, most users in the US have been convinced that they need 16-bit or 32-bit systems. Because of this, very few 8-bit machines are being sold in the US. And therefore, little software is being developed. If you have needs for commercial software, come on, let's go for it! Buy an ST! Klax is in the final stages of development for the 7800, and will be released by this summer. Great Game, isn't it? Have you heard it and seen it on the Lynx?

(Sam Tramiel) ga

(Peter J. Joseph)

First, thank you for taking the time to be here. My question: Do you think Atari will/can be the company it was in the early '80s and are you trying for this?

(Sam Tramiel)

We hope we will NOT be like Atari in the 80's. We want to be like Commodore in the early 80's. Joking aside, we have great aspirations in the US, you are right. The only way we can change this perception is through marketing, ie. advertising and user groups and users telling people that we make more than just great video games. In Europe today we are definitely known as a computer company that also makes video games.

(Bob Schubring)

Sam, when is the best time to call your offices in Sunnyvale? All the lines seem busy all the time! Our company, Coralizer Corp, is planning to write a package for the fire service, which will enable responders to chemical spill emergencies to assess quickly the hazards present. We want to use the Portfolio or a 68000-based portable as the system platform, and

hope you would help operations at night!

(Sam Tramiel)

We are planning to change our telephone system, and have had some minor hiccups. Sorry for any busy signals.

(Sam Tramiel)

If you call direct lines, this will not happen. Try Bob Brodie at (408) 745-2052 or EMAIL to 70007,3240 and he will be happy to contact you. Or fax him at 408-745-2088. Also, there are developer support phone numbers given in the developer newsletter. The Portfolio, of course, is not backlit. And we do not at this time plan to add a backlight, due to battery issues.

(Bruce Barr)

One comment on the business market...I know that the main developer for Wingz on the Macintosh and Windows/PM was VERY interested in Atari machines (Bruce Barr) when we first started. He had first programmed on an Atari and it was a personal favorite of his. (8bit machine) We ordered a ST, but decided that the machine wasn't a serious machine. My point is developers are out there, but they don't perceive your market as serious and the UNIX machines are going to need REAL dealers. What type of support are you offering developers and what inroads into the Unix/Open Systems market are planned?

(Sam Tramiel)

I am not clear what you mean by a "serious" machine. The ST/STE/TT are all serious machines, and have some fantastic software developed here in the US and all over the world. We have a good team of support people here in Sunnyvale for US developers and we would be more than happy to support more. I am not sure what you mean by "inroads" into Unix/Open Systems, our Unix is System V.4, uses X-windows 11.4, and will conform to Motif. We are doing all the "right" things. We also will support developers and have a Unix group led by Henry Plummer, who can answer Unix developer questions.

(STATUS (VA Beach))

What is the status of the MIDI Multitasking Environment. When will it be released?

(Sam Tramiel) MIDI-tasking is currently in beta-testing, and will be released as soon as it is finished.

STReport [Ralph]

Not really a question, more an observation.. The userbase's response to the recent marketing revelations has been superb. The majority of the userbase seems solidly in favor of the recent changes in marketing strategy. I am solidly in favor of them. Just wanted to say thank you and give my vote of confidence.

(Sam Tramiel)

Ralph, we really appreciate your support.

(Bob Schulze)

Hello, Mr. Tramiel.

You mentioned only certain US dealers would be dealing in TT's, how, then will I purchase one if I have no dealer nearby? mail-order? Drive *.kilometres? (And I *will* be buying one! :-)) Please kick rear, get the TT's out and about. <--naked desire

(Sam Tramiel)

I assume from your "out and about" and "kilometres" that you are Canadian. We are going to try to have TT dealers throughout North America and if you cannot find one in your area, just give us a call and we'll make some special arrangements.

(Jim Ness)

(via Portfolio - heh heh) Hi, Sam. First, I want to say that I am very impressed end by the recent changes in business approach taken by Atari. I suppose that some would say that you only got around to doing things the way they should have always been done. But I appreciate the improvement, in any case. Emulators are always on our minds. Do you think an Atari produced product which contained an emulator, part and parcel, would be a good idea?

(Sam Tramiel)

This is an interesting idea that you have, and we are investigating such things all the time. I cannot say more than that.

(Marty)

Hello Mr. Tramiel. I have 2 questions. The first question is: I have seen the ads for the Atari Portfolio and they all say that it is a 128K machine, upgradeable to 640K. When will this upgrade be in effect? or is there one planned? BTW, I too am on my Port. Second question: How many major s/w companies have plans to develop for the Port? I work at WordPerfect and Ron is familiar with our push to marry Atari and WP for a great wp for the Port.

(Sam Tramiel)

For expansion to 640K, please call Xoterix at (818) 888-7390. Retail price is \$299. We would be happy to work with Word Perfect on a word processor for the Portfolio. Please call Bill Rehbock at 408-745-2083. Where is Word Perfect 5.1 for the ST? :-> My kids are waiting for it.

(Doug Anderson)

I too am a business user - publishing: 4 Mega 4's, 2 520's using Pagestream - love it. I went with Atari 3 1/2 years ago. At the time given what IBM and MacIntosh were doing in the DTP market, it was a fairly logical choice; however, Atari hardware has not kept up with my needs. I have been disappointed with Atari's marketing to the business sector. With a machine as powerful as the ST and later the Mega, the business market was a natural but it hasn't happened. Users like myself are the very people who were capable of making the Atari into a business alternative and yet whenever I have dealt with your offices in Canada, there was no recognition that there was a business market out there. One of my principal beefs was the fact that nobody had any desire or willingness to bring European business software over to N. America for people like myself to use. High end scanning software with OCR was available in Europe two years ago and would have been very useful in my business yet no one in Atari has shown any interest. Any comments?

(Sam Tramiel)

We realize the importance of bringing high-end software to the North American market. And the easiest way is to bring it in from Europe. We are talking with most important developers in Europe and making sure that either we or another publisher will make their software available on this side of the Atlantic. You've pointed out a major issue which I assure you we are working on. Thank you.

(Sam Tramiel)

Just a few more last questions, please.

(Ron Carter)

When is ATARI going to take the US marketplace serious and open up a chain of Atari stores with the entire Atari product line available at a reliable, well staffed, well stocked easily accessible location?

(Sam Tramiel)

We plan to support dealers rather than open up our own stores. And we hope to make sure that these dealers will be well staffed, well stocked, and accessible.

(Bobby Dyer)

Thanks again for coming tonight Mr. Tramiel. I have 2 questions. First, what new software are you planning for the Portfolio this year (i.e. business, travel guides) and second, could you possibly mention any software titles being developed for the Panther. Thank you.

(Sam Tramiel)

New software that is being released can be found in our new "APB" bulletin on the Portfolio. Please call and leave your address and we will mail it to you. New titles include: Hyperlist, Power Basic, City Guide, etc. I will not announce titles for the Panther at this time, but I promise you they will be exciting and unique games. Please let us know what your favorite titles are, so we can add them to our "possible" list.

(Sysop Ron Luks)

Folks, we'll have time for just 3 more questions. If we don't get to yours, EMAIL it to BOB BRODIE 70007,3240.

(Eric Lambeth @ AUA)

I paid \$600+ for a 1040STE with some MAJOR defects, including the DMA bug. I then had to spend more \$\$\$ to send it back to Atari (Eric Lambeth @ AUA) and have it replaced. Now, Atari has dropped the bottom out of the prices of STEs.... I have seen them selling for \$379. Is this the type of corporate policy we can expect in the future? Don't you feel that such policies tend to alienate and engender hostilities in the userbase? Why would I buy a TT or Mega STE now when the price could drop 20% a year down the road? I have read several messages from you during this conference that 'VME cards will be available for the mega STE and TT 1.44 MB drives will be available for the MegaE/TT. WHAT ABOUT THE REST OF US??? There are LOTS of 1040STEs out there..... and MANY more STs and Megs. Are you abandoning us????

(Sam Tramiel)

Correct me if I'm wrong, we fixed your DMA problem, which I apologize for the problem occurring in the first place. Your dealer should have fixed this for you and therefore, you would not have had the grief of sending to us. As you are well aware, our industry is quite unique. We offer more power, features, for less money over time. If we do not lower prices and offer more features, we would quickly be out of business. The 1.44 mb floppy is being designed at present and when the Mega STE and TT were designed, this was taken into consideration. We are not trying to abandon, and will not abandon, 1040 owners. However, we cannot always satisfy issues like this. The VME card is a whole different issue. To offer expansion requires larger power supplies and other components which increases the cost of the computer. The 1040 is a lower priced machine, and therefore cannot have such features. If you don't buy it now, and always wait for the next price reduction/feature improvement, you'll never buy a computer. You'll always be waiting.

(David A. Johnson)

I've heard rumors about a new TT that has greatly enhanced graphics. Can you make any comment on this machine (does it exist; might it be a TT040)?

(Sam Tramiel)

We are not making any comments on any unannounced new products. Sorry.

(Sam Tramiel)

Last question.

(Steve Mays)

Thanks. As much as I would like to see the dealer base expanded (especially here in Atlanta), there must be people who want to buy ST's and TT's. What plans are there to bring the msg of Atari's commitment and machines to the masses? Will we see an effort to boost Atari's presence in th US? As another ST-using musician, I don't want to see hardware and especially software support erode further because of a shrinking user base. Can we look forward to a day when we see as many magazines for ST and TT users as for the Amiga (a good indicator of mass acceptance)? I've hung in this far--I hope to say that years from now. Thanks for listening and answering. Oh yes, what is the final word on STacy? (And will we see an Atari show in the South?!?)

(Sam Tramiel)

We plan to advertise in the US through our dealers. And as this network expands, we will do national advertising. This will not occur until we do have a national network. We feel that advertising through our dealers will get us good exposure and will start to expand the user base. We are also bringing in MIDI software from Europe and will work closely with developers to assure its availability. We are, as you know, supporting our own magazine, Atari Explorer. And are happy to support any other magazine as well. Stacy is available for professional use, ie. Musicians.. We have them in stock, and can ship now. If you have any particular questions in the music area, please call James Grunke at 408-745-4966. He is our new MIDI guru and ex-Beach Boy member. We will be happy to support an attend any coordinated effort for a user group show in the south. Contact Bob Brodie at 408-745-2052.

(Sam Tramiel)

Good night, it's been real nice. Please.. pray for rain in California.

.
(Sysop Ron Luks)

Ok folks. Thank you for attending... Goodnight all. If we didnt get to your question, send it directly to Sam c/o BOB BRODIE 70007,3240.

> CPU REPORTâ €

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Issue #100

by Michael Arthur

CPU INSIGHTSâ €

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V.32, THE CCITT, AND THE TALE OF THE 9600 BAUD MODEM

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Recently, a lot of attention has been placed towards the specific types of 9600 baud modems. It seems that as developments such as Magneto Optical Cartridge Drives, Megapixel displays and versatile microprocessors like the 80486 and 68040 appear so frequently in the industry, that in our endless pursuit of faster and more powerful computer technology (and to download that large file as fast as possible), we have come to expect the same rate of progress from our modems. But with the promise of faster modems have come controversy, as many modem manufacturers come out with incompatible products, each claiming to be the best. But in order to understand the current situation, we must take a look at the history of high-speed modems.

Modems were perhaps the first kind of computer network. Until the late 1980's, large corporations and the government were by far the biggest users of modems, looking more at reliability and power than the price or size of modems. In maintaining compatibility in data communications, (as compatibility is necessary in a global marketplace), the job of setting standards for modem transmission protocols fell to the CCITT, an agency of the United Nations that specifies standards for all aspects of the communications industry.

When 9600 baud modems were first developed in the early 70's, the CCITT drew up a recommendation, called V.29, which was the first such standard for these modems. But as only large corporations could afford them at that time, V.29 only covered synchronous modems communicating over leased lines, as well as 9600 baud Facsimile, or Fax Machines. CCITT V.29 is still used today in all Fax Machines, but modems would eventually take a divergent path.

In 1984, when advances in chip technology made it feasible to sell 9600 baud modems for less than 5000 dollars, the CCITT again set up a new standard for 9600 baud modems, designated as V.32. This specification was a great improvement over V.29, as V.32 modems could be used on regular phone lines, and had some support for asynchronous transmission and full duplex operation. The one problem with this otherwise adequate protocol is that it was expensive to implement.

In order to accomplish full duplex operation, V.32 used a technique called echo cancellation. When both modems transmit data simultaneously, first each modem remembers what it has sent, then each modem uses echo cancellation to separate the data signal that it sent, and process the incoming data. At 9600 baud, though, it requires the use of high speed Digital Signal Processors (or DSP's), and DSP's have only recently become available commercially, as well as the other circuitry required for a V.32 modem being expensive to produce.

This was not a great factor in 1984, though, as high speed modems were primarily sold to the business market back then, in a comparatively small market. However, when the user demand for 9600 baud modems began to increase in 1986, many modem manufacturers found the cost of developing the circuitry for V.32 modems prohibitive, and looked to other ways of making moderately priced 9600 baud modems.

One method of sending data at 9600 baud is to compress the data that is being sent through the modem. In all modems, this data is sent in 10 bit segments (8 bits of data plus a start and stop bit). Modems using data compression algorithms first compact these data segments to a smaller size and transmit them. The receiving modem then decompresses the data as it gets it. This enables modems running at a slower baud rate (2400-4800) to emulate 9600 baud transmission.

In another way, called the ping pong method, both modems buffer the data to be transmitted, and flow control is implemented, so stop and go signals are sent to each modem at a quick rate, telling each when it has the line free to transmit data. This, by the way, is similar to how packet switched networks operate.

Ping pong is necessarily a half-duplex method (where only one modem sends info at a time) because although full duplex operation does not require echo cancellation at lower transmissions (since the signal sent by both modems can both fit on the phone line's bandwidth), a single 9600 baud signal can take up all of the line's bandwidth. Echo cancellation removes this problem by cramming both signals together, and leaving it up to both modems to sort the data out. Ping pong, however, cannot do this, but gets around full duplex operation by acting as a "traffic cop" to manage the time that modems have to transmit data.

Another problem with 9600 baud modems, whether they use ping pong, echo cancellation, data compression, or any other method to achieve its transmission rate, is the increased probability of flawed data being sent, as a result of line noise or a poor connection. Because of this, the need for error correction in modems (where the modem would decrease its baud rate to reduce the chance of data errors, or simply retransmit the flawed data) became apparent. Into this situation, a company called Microcom arrived onto the scene.

MNP, CCITT V.42, and the future of Modeming

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Microcom is a modem manufacturer selling primarily to the business market. They saw the need for error protection in all types of modems (not just the high speed variety) and invented the Microcom Networking Protocol, or MNP.

MNP was one of the first protocols to implement point to point error correction. This meant that if an MNP-equipped modem called another MNP equipped modem, then they would have the benefit of error free data, but if a non-MNP equipped modem was called, then another protocol (such as V.22) would let the modems communicate, but without MNP error correction. There are 9 classes of MNP, representing its various stages of development. MNP Classes 1 to 3 only had error protection, as Microcom worked to make the error protection 100% efficient. But at around Class 4 or 5, Microcom saw that data compression would also be needed in modems, resulting that MNP Classes 5 and above provided a very efficient method of error protection, and excellent data compression. Many modem

manufacturers recognized MNP's capabilities and started licensing MNP. The result was that many of the earlier 9600 baud modems were MNP-capable.

So why hasn't MNP become THE 9600 baud standard today, with Microcom emerging as the modem industry's new Hayes? As in many other tragedies in the computer industry, this was caused by greed. Microcom, who also sold MNP modems to the business market, wished to have an edge over the licensees of MNP, who they began to see as their competition instead of their best allies. In order to do this, they started offering higher classes of MNP for their OWN modems than they licensed to other modem makers. As some of the other modem makers saw that they were being given less powerful Classes of MNP just so Microcom could become a standard, while Microcom itself took measures to put them out of business, some began looking for other protocols that implemented data compression and error protection. Even though MNP became a de facto standard, and Classes 5 and 6 of MNP were adequate for the job, these modem makers (many of whom weren't willing to openly shun MNP) delegated it to the status of an aging relic.

This was a master stroke of luck for Hayes Microcomputer. In the late 70s and early 1980's, Hayes had made a de facto standard of the AT modem command set by both selling aggressively to businesses and by considering the needs of the home market in the area of 300-2400 baud modems. But in 1986, modem technology had progressed to the point where 300-1200 baud modems were a lot less expensive. The resulting competition (and the boom in the modem market) caused Hayes modems (which were still pricey) to be overlooked in favor of less expensive and equally efficient Hayes compatible modems. So when MNP began to be joined by alternative protocols which provided error protection, Hayes saw an opportunity to regain its once monolithic stature in the industry.

The International Standards Organization (ISO), made up of the organizations in many countries that are responsible for standardization, (such as ANSI), designed X.25, the primary protocol used to connect synchronous computers to packet networks, in 1976. The LAP B protocol, or Link Access Procedure-Balanced, as well as LAP D (an extended version of LAP B used for ISDN (Integrated Services Digital Network) communications) are implemented in this protocol.

Since LAP B is an error correction protocol that is an international standard (since it was designed by the CCITT), Hayes decided to use it in their V-Series SmartModem 9600 modems. The SmartModem also uses a modified version of V.32 which, instead of using echo cancellation at 9600 baud, uses the ping pong method at half duplex. Many of the other modem makers who rejected MNP, though, used their own proprietary methods, which resulted in VAST incompatibility problems.

In order to establish a standard that would end these problems, the CCITT developed a new standard, called V.42, in 1988. The CCITT has developed a new protocol for V.42, called LAP M (Link Access Procedure for Modems). LAP M is based on LAP B and LAP D, and provides the necessary error correction for V.42, while also providing 7 and 8-bit data compression which is 30 percent more efficient than MNP Class 5. V.42 is designed for full duplex modems, and achieves 9600 baud by the use of isynchr-onous (asynchronous to synchronous) converters, which convert asynchronous data to synchronous data which the modem can interpret.

V.42 itself has not been fully defined by the CCITT, as neither data encryption (something which is VERY important to businesses), or half-duplex operation are included, but will appear in LAP M as optional

features. However, the vital components necessary to modem operation have been set, and modem manufacturers (such as Hayes and Microcom) will contribute to the process of establishing standards for these areas. Until a standard for data compression has been established, however, V.42 has "system hooks" in it, allowing modem manufacturers to use their own proprietary protocols. Also, since V.42 has regulated that this appear as an option, potential incompatibility problems are avoided.

MNP Classes 1-4 will be supported in CCITT V.42, for an alternative error protection protocol included to maintain compatibility with the vast user base which has accepted 9600 baud MNP modems. However, MNP Classes 5 or 6, which also have data compression algorithms, will not be supported in CCITT V.42. But since the American National Standards Institute (or ANSI) would be the final determinant of the US implementation of V.42, these Classes of MNP may be supported in the United States.

V.42 promises to be an excellent 9600 baud standard, which sets both rules for the internal makeup and data transmission between modems (except for the modem command set) and which establishes an adequate bridge/link for the present crop of incompatible 9600 baud modems. MNP-only modems, such as US Robotics' old models, will not become obsolete, due to V.42's support of MNP. Old versions of Hayes 9600 baud V-Series SmartModems have minimal incompatibility problems, since LAP M is a superset of LAP B. In addition, almost all major modem manufacturers now support the CCITT V.42 standard in some form, so virtually all future modems will use the standard.

> CPU STATUS REPORTâ €
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LATE BREAKING INDUSTRY-WIDE NEWS

Issue # 9

Compiled by: Lloyd E. Pulley, Sr.

- London, England

HARD DRIVIN' II READY FOR ST & AMIGA

Hard Drivin' II, a racing package, is now available from Domark for the Atari ST, Commodore Amiga and IBM PC's. This version is supposed to be a major improvement over the original, which received acclaim in the computer press. It includes a specially designed track editor that allows the user to redesign the course, allows two computers to be hooked together for competitive racing and faster execution speed and frame updating.

- Racine, Wisconsin

CD-ROM, FRED FISH, AVAILABLE FOR AMIGA

The Fred Fish Collection, a well-known source of shareware and public domain software for the Amiga, has been released on a CD-ROM (read only memory) disk by Hypermedia Concepts at a budget price of \$69-95. The CD-ROM disk contains the equivalent of all 410 current disks in the collection. Hypermedia plans to update the CD-Rom disk every four months.

- Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

VIRUS HITS DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY

The personal computers in the Duquesne University computer lab have been reported to be infected by a computer virus known as the Ohio Virus. The 400 personal computer systems will be inspected during the February 18-24 spring break at a cost of \$3,200 for program disinfectants.

- Cupertino, California

SONY MIGHT MAKE PART OF NEW MAC LAPTOP

Sony Corp. has reportedly confirmed that it will build major portions of the rumored new Macintosh laptop computer. Sony Officials said that while the final contract had not yet been signed, the Japanese company will build significant portions of the new laptop machine.

Apple said that the report was "purely rumor and speculation" and stated that "We certainly won't comment on unannounced products". Apple did confirm that they would have a new notebook computer by the end of the year.

Apple's current model, the Macintosh Portable weighs approximately 15 pounds and Apple has been careful not to call it a "laptop". Published reports have said that the rumored Apple laptop will weigh about 5.5 pounds, contain a 40-megabyte hard drive and cost about \$2,500.

- Dubai, Abu Dhabi

MID-EAST PIRACY PUT AT \$100 MILLION

According to an executive of Lotus Development Corp., the software industry loses \$100 million a year in the Middle East and \$2 billion a year worldwide due to piracy. Lotus estimated it lost \$24 million in the Middle East alone to illegal copying. Lotus is calling for more stringent copyright laws in the region.

- New York, New York

PRODIGY'S GULF COVERAGE PRAISED

Prodigy has gone from getting criticism because of its message editing policies to receiving praise for the same actions. Only now, it's being applied to news from the Gulf War. According to Joshua Harris, president of Jupiter Communications, the result is the slickest online news coverage ever. Harris, who in the past has criticized Prodigy for its editing tactics, says of the coverage, "It's good. They have

pictures, and planes that move around, a little slide animation and it's easy to use". Regarding the competition, he says "Everyone else is just stripping stuff out of the news or offering forums."

- Washington, D.C.

MEXICAN SOFTWARE PIRACY IS PANDEMIC

The Software Publishers Association (SPA) Wednesday told the U.S. House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Trade that it could support the Free Trade Agreement with Mexico only if Mexico immediately enacted a national copyright bill which would protect U.S. intellectual property, particularly, copyright protection for computer programs.

SPA cited its reasons as pandemic software piracy losses which are estimated to reach at least \$100 million in 1991, estimates that there are eight illegal copies of software packages in use for every one legitimate version, and Mexican copyright laws that have a maximum criminal fine for infringement of 10,000 pesos (\$3.40 US).

- Munich, Germany

FIRST EVER AMIGA SHOW IN BERLIN

AMI Shows Europe will be using all 45,000 sq. ft of the Berliner Messe convention complex to hold its first Amiga '91 Berlin show on April 25-28. More than 80 exhibitors are expected to attend with an attendance of over 40,000 people.

Alexander Glos, general manager of AMI Shows Europe, said that he felt that the Amiga was going from strength to strength in Europe, particularly in Western Germany and the United Kingdom, and that this interest was reflected by the number of people that his company was able to attract to its shows.

:HOW TO GET YOUR OWN GENIE ACCOUNT:

To sign up for GENie service: Call: (with modem) 800-638-8369.

Upon connection type HHH (RETURN after that).
Wait for the U#= prompt.

Type: XTX99587,CPUREPT then, hit RETURN.

**** SIGN UP FEE WAIVED ****

The system will now prompt you for your information.

-> NOW! GENIE STAR SERVICE IS IN EFFECT!! <-

> THE FLIP SIDE STR Featureâ ¢ "A different viewpoint...."
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A LITTLE OF THIS, A LITTLE OF THAT
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by Michael Lee

If you are like myself and use the ICD hard drive software, you have probably been curious as to how to configure all of the buffers. The docs' explanation leave much to be desired. Or you might have wondered how ICD software compared to CACHExxx program.

Doug Wheeler (ICD) has done an excellent job of explaining both to us on Genie...

Perhaps I can shed some light on this (it's also explained fairly well in the newest ICD AdSCSI host adapter manual).

HDUTIL lets you adjust the size of 3 different caches:

- TOS Data Buffers - this is equivalent to CACHExxx's 'D' buffers
- TOS FAT Buffers - this is equivalent to CACHExxx's 'F' buffers.
- ICD cache - this is an intelligent caching system with read-ahead and elevator sorting (and more)

So, setting the TOS Data Buffers to 90 and the TOS FAT Buffers to 90 is the same as running CACHE090.PRG. The TOS buffers are maintained entirely by TOS, so the speed improvement should be the same.

The ICD cache, on the other hand, is handled entirely by ICDBOOT, and is very fast. Basically, this cache can store a given number of blocks of data (number set by HDUTIL's "Blocks in Cache" option) of a given size (set by HDUTIL's "Block Size" option). For example, if you set them both to 20, you'd have 20 cache blocks which can each store 20 sectors. If you're using standard 512 byte sectors, that'll take 200K.

When a disk read occurs, if the requested data is in the cache, it will come from there. If the data is not in the cache, it will be read from disk. At the same time, ICDBOOT puts that data into the cache and may even read more data off the HD at the same time and cache it (reading a block of 10 sectors takes almost no more time than reading 1 sector). The size of the cache blocks determines the limit on how much to read-ahead. So, if a program read 19 sectors and your block size was 20 sectors, it could only read-ahead 1 additional sector. On the other hand, if a program read 1 sector, it could read-ahead 19 more sectors. So, if the program then wanted to read the next sectors, they'd already be in the cache.

BTW, to see if you have the latest manual, look for the number "36-90" on the lower-right corner of the back cover.

In the past, there have been rumors that Best Electronics carried a power supply for the ST that was more powerful than the normal one that you get from Atari. Here are some comments concerning that...

From J.Strand on Genie...

I check with Best on their power supply because it slips right in the Atari case. They told me their power supply only puts out about 35-40 watts, that their power supply was just made from better components than the Atari one.

From George Richardson (Merlin Group - Gadgets by Small) on Genie...

...I've tried a Best power supply. Although the fellow told me it could supply more current than an ST supply, I found *NO* difference. The supposedly superior components may make it more reliable, but I've only had problems with the capacity of the supplies, not the reliability.

From Mike Valent on Genie...

...I bought a Best power supply in December and can attest that it's the same rated capacity as Atari's original. What Mega owners really have needed is a larger CAPACITY supply that fits in the same space.

Question from Javier del Rio on CIS....

I have a 520STfm hooked to a TV. I would like to know if it is possible to connect a Samsung RGB monitor (for IBM CGA) to my ST?

Answer from Mike DeMetz on CiS...

Not really. Since IBM CGA is TTL and the Atari is Analog. You could use that monitor that Radio Shack has for the COCO 3 although it is not high rez but better than a TV.

From GRIDBUG on Delphi...

I called Electronic Arts and they admitted...that Powermonger does have a problem formatting saved game disks. Shame!

Speaking of power supplies. It seems that Gadgets new SST might need a larger one...

From George Richardson (Merlin Group) on Genie...

...Dave and I have been aware of the power supply problem since way back....Unfortunately, the only adequate solution to the internal supply problem looks like a custom made job. There's no way Gadgets could make back the money required to do this, now that the Mega has been discontinued. As a result, we're considering an external "brick" type supply that will be switched on by a relay board that plugs into the extra power connector in the Mega. The new supply will only power the SST board, the normal Mega power supply will handle the Mega itself and the expansion board, if any. I realize that this is less than ideal, but it's all I've been able to come up with that's affordable.

Question by Mike Valent on Genie...

How much power is this board going to require? Is the -030 that much of a power drain, or is it the load of a full set of RAM chips?...Remember that some of us will have the Moniterm board plugged into the extra power connector.

Answer from George Richardson (Merlin Group) on Genie...

...the '030 is no problem at all, but four 1 meg x 8, 80ns SIMMs draw almost 3 amps when active. Since only one bank of SIMMs is being addressed at a time, the current draw on the board stays at about 3 amps maximum and quite a bit lower when Fastram is not being accessed.

The relay board will have a pass through connector so that things like the Moniterm will still be able to plug in. The SST also has a power pass through connector. So does the Megatalk board, now that I think of it.

Question from Bob Retelle, Sysop on CIS...

Here's a question for everyone who's done any modifications to STs with internal drives. Would it be possible to disable (unplug) the internal "A" drive, and use two external drives as "A" and "B" by using the normal "in and out" ports on the external drives?

Answer from Bill Heaton on CIS...

...From my understanding of how the disks are setup, I would expect the drive B select is on the "normal" drive A pin of the external connector. This would force the first drive to drive B. I would further suspect that the pass-thru on the external drives swap the two drive select lines so the second drive in the chain sees the other (normally B) select as its A select. For the Internal drive systems IF the drive A select IS on the external connector, it would be on the "normal" drive B pin. The result would look something like this:

COMPUTER TYPE	PIN	FIRST DRIVE	SECOND DRIVE
	DRIVE A-----	DRIVE A-\/-----	(DRIVE B) DRIVE A
Standard ST	DRIVE B-----	DRIVE B-\/-----	(DRIVE A) DRIVE B
	DRIVE B-----	DRIVE B-\/-----	(DRIVE A) DRIVE A
Internal ST	DRIVE A-----	DRIVE A-\/-----	(DRIVE B) DRIVE B

This would mean if the internal drive is disconnected, the external drives would work, however their sequence would be reversed (Drive B first then A). You could check external pins 5 & 6 while accessing drives A & B to see how they are mapped.

Question from Ron Weldin on Genie...

The clock just died inside my 14 month STHD. I would like to try a new battery in it. What size/kind do you recommend and is it soldered in ?

Answer from Tom (ICD) on Genie...

It is a 3 volt lithium cell. We presently use a DL2430 (Duracell) in a battery socket. We started using battery sockets about 2 years ago. If your battery is soldered directly in, you can remove it and solder a socket in its place. BTW "2430" means 24 mm diameter coin cell that is 3 mm thick. It will function down to about 2.2 volts.

Question from Marc Lacombe on CIS (slightly edited)...
...I am thinking of buying...a Syquest 44mb removable hard drive...can it could also be used on an IBM?...If I buy an IBM in a few years, it would be nice to know that my Atari hard drive could do double duty.

Answer from Bob Retelle (Sysop) on CIS...
...most hard drive mechanisms, including the SyQuest can be easily installed in an IBM style system. All you need is a compatible controller card and you're in business!

Answer from Bob Brodie (Atari User Group Co-Ordinator) on CIS...
The heart and soul of the Syquest is a true SCSI device. Just unplug it from the host adapter that it's connected to, and your ready to rock and roll. You can use it on a Mac, you can use it on an Amiga, you can use it on an IBM, you can use it on ANYTHING that understands SCSI or can interpret SCSI.

Speaking of hard drives....

Question from Kurt Schmidt on Genie...
Has anyone...any information as to how to upgrade my Megafire 30 drive to a higher capacity drive? Do I need SCSI or MFM or ??? Plus, if I do upgrade, what HD driver do I use to format with? The one that came with the Megafire will only format 30, 45, or 60 Mb. Any help would be appreciated.

Answer from Doug Wheeler (ICD) on Genie...
...The Megafire 30 has an integrated host adapter and RLL controller. Unless you plan on doing a LOT of soldering, you can only replace the drive with another RLL drive (which works great). If you do this, you will have to play with Atari's WINCAP file to add the information for the drive you install (unless it happens to be one Atari uses in one of their other drives).

Little known tidbit: The controller in the Megafire 30 is a modified Adaptec 4070 which can handle 1:1 interleave (the real Adaptec can't)... if you have already formatted your Megafire 30 with Atari's software then it is already 1:1 interleaved. If you used Supra's or ICD's software you would have had to explicitly specify 1:1 interleave.

Question from R.Randall5 on Genie...
I had received a copy of FATSPEED...so I decided to give it a try...My question is:...Are there potential conflicts? Could the performance obtained with FATSPEED be obtained with proper tuning of ICDHOST parameters alone...This is by far the best disk performance that I've seen yet.

Answer from Nevin Shalit (PageStream Sysop) on Genie...
Fatspeed is great. I've used it for at least 2 years on both TOS 1.0 and TOS 1.2 machines, with Atari and ICD hard drives. You need Fatspeed as the ICD software does not duplicate its functions.

Answer from Tom (ICD) on Genie...

Fatspeed addresses a problem with TOS 1.0 and 1.2 versions. TOS 1.4 fixed it so fatspeed is not necessary. Since 1.4 was shipping when we came out with caching (at least to developers) and Fatspeed was already there, we didn't see it as necessary. By all means, use Fatspeed if you have TOS 1.0 or 1.2.

Until next week.....

> 88MB SYQUEST! STR InfoFileâ € 88mb removable-cartridge hard disks
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SYQUEST "88" TO DEBUT!
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SyQuest removable-cartridge hard disks, for three years a fixture among desktop publishers, multimedia developers and others who need to transport or archive large files, will soon grow to double their current capacity.

SyQuest Technology, developer of the expandable storage system, this week will announce a new generation of its drives and double-density cartridges, which together will be capable of storing up to 88 Mbytes of data per cartridge. Called the SQ5110, the new mechanism is slated to ship in limited quantities early in the second quarter and in volume in June.

At least three leading Macintosh storage vendors - Mass Microsystems Inc., MicroNet Technologies Inc. and Peripheral Land Inc.- plan to release systems based on the enhanced technology as soon as it is available. All three vendors apparently plan to price their drives at about \$1,800, with extra high-density cartridges at \$200 to \$250.

The new drives will read but not write to the 44-Mbyte SyQuest format. The current SQ555 mechanism, of which the company sold 150,000 last year, will remain in production for the foreseeable future.

Described by SyQuest officials as an "evolutionary" product, the SQ5110 will deliver the same 20-millisecond average seek time as recent versions of the lower-capacity drives. Overall performance, however, will be improved 25 percent to 30 percent, according to the company, by a new 32-Kbyte buffer and better buffer-management techniques. The new models also should prove more reliable than their predecessors. SyQuest rates the SQ5110 at 60,000 hours MTBF (mean time between failure), compared with 30,000 for the current model.

Among vendors announcing support for the SQ5110, Mass Microsystems of Sunnyvale, Calif., said it plans five configurations under the DataPak 88

name, including two dual-drive versions and three footprints matching various Mac cases. The company said single-drive models will be priced "below \$2000" and its preformatted DataCart 88 cartridges will retail for less than \$200.

MicroNet Technologies of Irvine, Calif., plans to list its drive, the MR-90, at \$1,795; extra cartridges will be \$238. Peripheral Land of Fremont, Calif., said its entry, the Infinity 88 Turbo, will be priced "below \$1,800." The company also plans to offer an optional SCSI-2 card in a bundle with the drive.

For now, SyQuest said, it will offer the SQ5110 only to selected OEM customers, not to distributors. The policy, while it lasts, is likely to keep prices relatively firm. The 44-Mbyte drives, introduced three years ago at the same \$1,800 retail level, are now available from direct-sales outlets for as little as \$500.

This week's announcement represents a major challenge to Iomega Corp. of Roy, Utah, SyQuest's chief competitor in the Mac removable-storage market. Iomega offers 42-Mbyte Bernoulli cartridges in several configurations. Officials said the company is working on products with the same capacity as the new SyQuest that will be announced later this year "when fully tested and ready to ship into the channel".

The 88-Mbyte drives will also bring SyQuest into competition with the 3.5-inch, 128-Mbyte erasable optical systems, which several companies are now shipping in limited volume. SyQuest officials claimed their drive, although its capacity is lower, will deliver three times the performance of the opticals at not much more than half the price.

> MASS WHAT??? STR FOCUSâ € "parasites".... coming out of the woodwork."
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ATARI MARKETPLACE IN CRISIS
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by Sheldon Winick

(GEnie address: S.WINICK)
Computer Studio - Asheville, NC

Earlier today I got a call from Ralph Mariano to discuss the current state of affairs of the Atari marketplace in this country, and our concerns about the future for Atari's existing dealer base. In this vein, he

also requested that I write an essay for ST Report that would express the concerns of Atari's dealers regarding Atari's recent announcements of a return to general distribution of its products, a major slash in retail pricing, and a return to mass merchandising Atari systems.

As most of you know, Ralph and I have been involved in many, how shall I put it.... "interesting" debates in the past on both GENie and the National ST Echo. We have agreed on some things and disagreed on others. In fact we still do. But one thing we definitely are in total agreement on is the current state of affairs in the Atari marketplace, and the fact that current market conditions will prevent new dealerships from picking up the Atari line as well as threaten the very existence of our current meager dealer base.

Many of us warned that the results of Atari's recent announcements would be exactly what we are currently witnessing. And all is not well in the Atari marketplace. Atari's recent marketing decisions have been interpreted by the price-gouging mail-order marketers to mean that Atari is condoning a return to a completely uncontrolled marketplace. They hope to grab up Atari products and market them at ridiculously low prices on a national level to reap a quick volume profit on a sudden increase of sales. They are doing just that from a self-created buying frenzy from the existing Atari user base anxious for the opportunity to upgrade to new equipment at bargain prices, usually at just a few dollars above normal dealer cost.

And that is exactly what is happening as the Atari marketplace is rapidly blossoming with all of those price-gouging merchants (who, in order to save space we shall hereinafter refer to as "parasites") who seem to be coming out of the woodwork. They are making a quick buck at the expense of potentially destroying the existing base of Atari's "real" dealerships. They do not care about the overall health and well-being of the Atari user base and are only in this to make a quick buck. They do not care that the customers they are selling to are abandoning support of the local "real" dealerships that can provide ongoing service and support for their customers.

These parasites are the same ones that nearly destroyed the Atari marketplace in past years, and helped create the "image" of Atari systems as "cheap" and incompetent systems not deserving of support from "real" dealerships. They are the same parasites that helped destroy the dealer network in the mid-80's and helped prevent establishment of "real" dealerships who could properly introduce Atari systems to "new" customers and provide the training, service and support necessary for business users to consider purchasing Atari systems and take them seriously.

Atari's marketing announcements in and of themselves are not necessarily detrimental to the Atari marketplace. Cutting retail prices can spur new excitement. Putting Atari systems into general distribution can make their products more readily accessible to dealers on a regional basis for quicker delivery. And placing appropriate products into the hands of mass-merchandisers can serve to give Atari products increased visibility in the marketplace and introduce many more people to Atari computers.

But there is a great difference between placing Atari products in the hands of legitimate mass-merchandisers such as K-mart or Sears who will guarantee they get maximum exposure to a large portion of the general population, and could serve to greatly increase the base of Atari users in this country, as opposed to allowing all these mail-order parasites to flood the market of existing Atari users with cheap upgrades at the

expense of harm to the existing dealer base. The mail-order price gouging parasites cater to "existing" Atari owners and do little or nothing to introduce new customers to Atari's systems. They offer no major exposure of Atari products to the general population, and will not provide ongoing service and support to the Atari user base.

I have always felt there is a need for Atari to mass-merchandise a "power pack" or "advantage package" in major national retailers. I may disagree with Ralph on exactly which products should be part of that package, but the advantages of such a marketing approach would benefit the Atari community in the long term regardless of whether the package is based on the 520 or 1040STe system.

Personally, I feel the 520 would be a more appropriate package at the present time. Perhaps, once we dealers have access to the more powerful Mega STe's in a dealer configurable form, as well as the TT030 systems in quantity as an FCC class B device, then having the 1040STe in mass-merchandisers might not be such a bad idea. But... at the present time, the 1040STe remains the bread and butter machine for most dealers; it's the one that pays the rent and keeps bread on our family's tables while we work, and struggle, to make headway in the business community for our Mega business systems.

Losing that could be very costly to many of Atari's dealerships and could mean the difference between whether or not the marginal dealerships can survive as Atari dealers. Those of us who are well-established are not the ones that will be most hurt by mass-merchandising the 1040STe -- it's those small, marginal dealers who don't have a business oriented customer base who will suffer most. And like it or not, those are the dealerships that make up the bulk of Atari dealers around the country.

But none of us will survive very long if Atari allows these uncontrolled market conditions to continue. No real dealership can survive for very long if they are forced to compete in price with those price gouging hoare merchants. No real dealership can survive for long on selling expensive computer products at just a few dollars above cost. No real dealership can continue to offer his customers quality selection, service and support if he is not allowed to make a fair margin of profit on the merchandise he sells. No real dealership can afford to pay for an expensive storefront and a large volume of stock if he has to compete in price with someone working the mail-order marketplace out of a garage or warehouse with a 1-800 phone line.

And worse still is the fact that if these mail-order parasites are allowed to continue, what do you think the chances will be that you'll ever see Atari products in legitimate mass-merchandisers such as Sears or K-mart? And the chances you'll ever have a real local Atari dealer are even less than that!

Atari --- you CAN stop this before its too late. These marketing conditions are identical to those that cost Atari the majority of its real dealer base back in the mid-80's and alienated those dealers so much that even when Atari changed their marketing approach in 1988, most still wouldn't even consider carrying Atari products again.

Atari can put controls on who is authorized to sell its products, and they can set minimum requirements for dealerships. But they must be willing and able to enforce those restrictions. And the consumer must understand that the real cost for those fantastic bargains from the parasites is the destruction of real dealerships, the ultimate loss of support

from major developers, a reduction in the availability of peripherals, and a complete loss of the real dealers who won't be around to provide the Atari owner with ongoing service and support.

And Atari must realize that no matter how great their "business" machines are, they will NOT have a market for them in the United States if there are no dealers around who are qualified to market them properly to the business customer.

This is a no-win situation for everyone..... everyone except the parasites who will grab a quick profit at everyone else's expense. And that includes you consumers, us dealers, and Atari themselves. And if those of you who are rushing to grab up those bargains don't realize the consequence of your purchases, you're just kidding yourselves.

Happy (Atari) computing,
Sheldon Winick (Computer Studio -- Asheville, NC)

> HOTWIRE 3.0! STR Spotlightâ € THE NEXT GENERATION
=====

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*****
*
*           CodeHead Software Announces HotWire 3.0           *
*           -----                                           *
*
*           MORE POWER -- NO WAITING -- NOW SHIPPING!!        *
*
*****
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CodeHead's HotWire now offers even more power than before!
With a SINGLE keypress or mouse click you can start up to

74 (SEVENTY-FOUR) 74

Programs, Documents, Menus, ASSIGN.SYS files, MultiDesk Setup
Files, or Work Files!!

HOTWIRE 3.0
THE NEXT GENERATION

HotWire is still the FASTEST, EASIEST, way to run programs on the Atari
ST, STe, or TT. Don't be deceived by copycat claims...for all of its
incredible power, HotWire 3.0 is amazingly easy to use. It's far more

intuitive than any other desktop...just ask a non-Atari user to try both HotWire and the GEM desktop and you'll see what we mean!

With seventy-four programs or menus available by a SINGLE action, you can access over 5,000 programs with just TWO actions!! Try doing that with any other utility or desktop on ANY computer system...you can't!

HotWire 3.0 now has a Global Block of 20 entries. These programs, documents, and menus are available ALL of the time, no matter which menu is currently loaded.

HotWire 3.0 is now fully compatible with the Atari TT as well as the Mega STe...all resolutions on all Atari computers including all large-screen monitors! The many auxiliary programs included in the HotWire package are also now TT-compatible.

You can now choose any available color for any menu entry, allowing you to create attractive, colorful menus with emphasis on certain entries or groups of entries. Color entries are available on the TT as well as the regular ST medium and low-res modes. You can also choose from eight different background patterns in any color to change the look of your HotWire screen.

HotWire includes a special version of Charles Johnson's Button Fix accessory that communicates with HotWire to let you enable or disable BUTTNFIX automatically for each program. This solves the notorious "double button press" problem with TOS versions 1.4 and higher.

Many other enhancements, bug fixes, and user interface tweaks make this new version of HotWire a MAJOR upgrade.

HOTSAVER 1.3 THE ULTIMATE SCREEN SAVER/MOUSE ACCELERATOR!

Also included with HotWire 3.0 is HotSaver, the HotWire screen saver. HotSaver is not only the ultimate screen saver for Atari computers, it is now the ULTIMATE MOUSE ACCELERATOR, too! HotSaver is the FIRST ST mouse accelerator that lets YOU determine how fast or slow the mouse cursor moves! You can choose from eight different, completely configurable mouse setups. Mouse movement can be adjusted for both horizontal and vertical motions, with values of 0-99 settable for each amount of movement from 1 to 10. You can even slow down your mouse movement by using a mouse division factor.

HotSaver is also the first "triple state" program for the Atari ST ... you can run THE SAME FILE as an AUTO program, a desktop application, OR a desk accessory! This gives you the utmost flexibility in memory usage, and lets you reconfigure HotSaver at any time. It also includes a time and/or date display within its "floating" logo -- you can even replace its logo with your own (available through an optional package). There's also an option for automatically or manually parking and unparking your hard drives.

The HotWire 3.0 package also includes a new HOT file editor (HOT files are HotWire menus saved on disk). HotEdit was formerly HotPathSetter, but it now allows you to change ANY aspect of your HOT file menu entries while viewing all of the entries' settings. This makes it easy to clean up your menus with regard to settings such as ledgering, clock, command lines, return options, titles, and much more.

And don't forget all of the powerful and unique features we pioneered in earlier versions of HotWire:

- o Up to 16 alarms may be set for one-time, daily, weekly, or monthly reminders. Alarms will ring in any program, GEM, TOS, or the desktop, complete with a descriptive message. There's even an unparalleled individualized configurable multi-regenerative "snooze" feature that allows you to quickly silence an alarm but be reminded again a short time later if you didn't have time to respond to it.
- o Ledger function records the time spent in programs of your choice, also showing the total elapsed time since you began working.
- o PASSWORDS may be used to restrict unauthorized access to certain programs.
- o Configurable on-screen CLOCK, appears in the programs that you choose.
- o Programs can be CHAINED or looped so that the next program automatically runs when you quit the current one.
- o RELIABLY auto-start any ST program at bootup on any version of TOS.
- o Choose from among over 400 possible "hot" key combinations for starting programs, documents, menus, etc.
- o HotWire runs as either an ordinary ST program, or as a "resident" program that's always at your beck and call. Summon up the HotWire Menu any time you're on the GEM desktop simply by clicking the right mouse button or by typing Right-Shift-Help.
- o DOCUMENTS can be installed in the HotWire menu, so you can simply click on the file you want and it will start up the appropriate program, loading that document automatically.
- o COMMAND LINES can be easily entered and saved with your menus to provide unlimited possibilities for customizing your operations.
- o Unlike other shells, HotWire works correctly with ALL PROGRAMS, just like the GEM desktop.
- o Programmable command lines allow you to create your own powerful shells, similar to ArcShell.
- o Special features, including environment parameters, make HotWire an excellent shell for developers, no matter what programming language you use. It is used at CodeHead to develop all of our products.
- o Written in 100% ASSEMBLY LANGUAGE for optimum speed and compact size.

HotWire is the command center of the CodeHead Integrated Desktop System. Our programs have many invisible communication links that allow you to do things like:

- o Load accessories into MultiDesk by clicking on a HotWire menu entry.

- o Load an ASSIGN.SYS file into G+Plus by clicking on a HotWire menu entry.
- o Bring up MultiDesk or MaxiFile by clicking on its icon or pressing a function key.
- o Double click on ANY program, document, or file in MaxiFile and HotWire will take over, running the program or installing the document into whatever application you've defined.
- o Each time you run MaxiFile as a program, it will reappear in the same state as you last left it...without saving your configuration.
- o HotSaver will automatically adjust your ledger entries based on actual activity within the program, subtracting the time that the screen saver was active.
- o Install resident programs from HotWire and clear accesories from MultiDesk without losing those resident programs.

The combination of all these features is what makes HotWire the choice of the discriminating power user as well as the average user. HotWire is equally useful with a hard disk or a floppy based system. Every day, more and more Atari owners put their other desktop systems on the shelf as they discover that HotWire can increase their productivity more than any other single application or utility for Atari computers. HotWire is used by more Atari developers and programmers (including Atari employees) than any other alternate desktop. If you haven't experienced HotWire, maybe it's time that you did, and you might also be saying things like:

"HotWire is the next best thing to a direct mind link interface."

- Chet Walters, WizWorks
(author of MUG SHOT and
IMG CAT)

"Once you use HotWire it is hard to fly the ST without it. HotWire quickly changes the way you use your ST."

- Ron Robinson, ST Informer
August 1989

"WARNING: If you're not using CodeHead Software, you're wasting computing power."

- Joe Meehan, satisfied
CodeHead user and extremely
intelligent individual

"...all I want is sheer unadulterated POWER. That's what I get from HotWire..."

- John Gilmore, another
satisfied CodeHead user
with a taste for power

"I dreamed I flew through the air in my spiritual uplift bra..."

- A San Francisco user, from

a registration card

And for still another view of HotWire, be sure to take a look at Richard Gunther's tutorial/review in the January-February and March-April 1991 issues of Current Notes! This two part article is a well written, step-by-step introduction to the power of HotWire and MaxiFile.

Remember...don't be fooled by cheap imitations that promise the world but deliver Poughkeepsie, or expensive over-hyped systems that offer less power. The overwhelming reason that our customers are so satisfied is that CodeHead software works as advertised and it works WELL! Look up "bullet-proof" in the dictionary ... and you'll find the CodeHead Software logo.

As a current owner of HotWire, you can obtain an update by sending your original HotWire master disk and \$10 to the address listed below. If you still have the old red and black manual, include an additional \$5 for a new manual (you'll need it).

Suggested retail price for HotWire 3.0 is \$44.95, or you can get HotWire Plus -- HotWire packaged together with MaxiFile -- for \$69.95, a savings of \$15. CodeHead Products are available from your local Atari dealer, through mail-order houses, or directly from CodeHead Software:

CodeHead Software
P.O. Box 74090
Los Angeles, CA 90004

Phone: (213) 386-5735
FAX: (213) 386-5789
BBS: (213) 461-2095

CodeHead Software accepts Mastercard, Visa, and American Express, as well as checks, money orders, and cash. Shipping charges are \$3 US, \$4 Canada, and \$6 elsewhere.

Current office hours are Monday-Friday 9A-1P Pacific time. Prices and hours are subject to change without notice.

Thank you for your support!

P.S. And just wait until you see the new version of MaxiFile!!! CodeHead's ultimate file maintenance utility has taken a QUANTUM LEAP in power, and now includes unique features available on NO OTHER PERSONAL COMPUTER SYSTEM! More details will be forthcoming on this exciting upgrade very soon...

> NO DOUBLE TALK! STR FOCUSâ €
=====

MASS WHO? MASS WHAT?

THE RIGHT THING TO DO!
=====

by Ralph F. Mariano

"We will be using distributors as a secondary method of distributing our products. The Lynx, the Portfolio, and the STEs are all in distribution now. The only products that will be held back from distribution will be the TT. We feel this will enable us to have a greater penetration throughout the US market."

Greg Pratt, 02/06/91

This spectacular revelation was presented to the users during a recent online conference. It has engendered a large measure of hope for the future of Atari and its marketplace in the USA. Participating in the recent conference was Greg Pratt with Bob Brodie at the keyboard. While the announcement created a wave of hope for the future it also allowed very familiar voices to raise old objections from the past. With a NEW TWIST added for good measure. Of the Atari dealers still in operation, a few have found it necessary to make some rather loud and absolutely confusing claims and statements concerning the new marketing AND distribution plans Atari has announced.

MASS MARKETING: RETAIL LEVEL

Sales of certain hardware and software items through mass marketing establishments. ie; CIRCUIT CITY, etc.

These firms are involved in consumer direct sales only and then on a massive coast to coast basis.

NATIONAL DISTRIBUTION: WHOLESALE LEVEL

Sales of all products offered in the USA, except the TT030 series, to National Distribution centers. ie; Pacific, Almo, American, Avnet, etc.

These firms are solely involved in selling wholesale to their own, established dealers. In most cases, these distributors have more stringent requirements for who wish to be dealers than Atari has.

The breath of the speakers has not had time to chill in the night air.., And already an "outspoken" dealer or two were voicing "opinions" on how "they" would do it. True, STReport has done the same in the past. And will probably again. In this particular situation however, Atari is

completely ON TRACK and CORRECT.

STReport finds Atari's decision; that.. "key dealers" in the new, "Strategic Partner Program", will be among the outlets for the TT030 series of computers which will not be allowed to flow through national distribution channels is an excellent and far reaching positive decision.

Further, STReport applauds Atari for having the courage and fortitude to make such a strong decision fully knowing that certain dealers would jump up screaming "foul" for allowing the MEGA STE into national distribution. STReport emphatically asserts the Mega STE belongs there! Atari must not allow these folks an opportunity to fragment the decision.

Allowing all the STE units including the MEGA STE into national distribution channels is 100% correct. Haranguing aimed at this type decision by those involved in Niche markets, SIGs, and self interests have all added to the problems of the past. Atari mustn't allow this to occur again. The entire Atari arena is on the road to recovery!

To those who find it so easy to create boondoggles and confusion we say; STOP NOW! Please, let the new, future enhancing plan work! Be creative in your own plans for the future. Consider the large numbers of new users who will require all types of assistance. Business opportunities and dealer enrichment programs can abound if this new plan is given an opportunity to work. ATARI must stand firm on this decision. ATARI and only ATARI can fully decide on, and influence its future and destiny.

In the past, Atari seemed "compelled" to cater to the wishes of the special interest groups ie; DEALERS. For example; the "dealer only decision", remember when mail order houses could no longer obtain product?? Remember all those huge ads those mail order houses had strategically placed throughout the entire computing marketplace and their catalogs that we ALL saw? Since that time, the entire market has been slowly falling into the dismal abyss of stagnation with most of us, screaming at and begging Atari "to do something!" Some of "us" :-) even went so far as to "energetically suggest" what Atari should be doing to improve the situation. Atari has responded positively. As a result, STReport is in full agreement with this decision and encourages everyone's participation in supporting Atari's decision.

The time has truly come for all the users to "RALLY 'ROUND THE FUJI" by making Atari aware that you too, fully support the latest marketing decision made known recently by Greg Pratt. This decision will fully establish the presence of Atari products, (The Lynx, the Portfolio, and the STEs) and their availability coast to coast in the USA. STReport is completely supportive of the decision to place all but the TT030 series of computers into mass distribution channels. There is no better way to get the product to everybody. The entire USA Atari community needed this and the reaction of the Stock Market also reflects it as the "right thing to do".

> 2 TIER DEVs STR InfoFileâ ¢
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ATARI DEVELOPERS GROUP

ATARI DEVELOPERS GROUP
Tier 1 and Tier 2 Membership Requirements

Membership in either Atari Developers Group has many benefits, but it also has obligations.

To be an active Tier 1 member
you must fulfill the following requirements:

- 1) You must be currently developing or marketing at least one commercial product for use with Atari computers.
- 2) You must register with the Tier 1 group. This consists of paying the \$250.00 registration fee, completing the Application form, executing the Non-disclosure Agreement, and completing one Product Information form for each of your products. (If you have no current products, please submit a business plan.)
- 3) You must complete a new Product Information form for each new product you release.
- 4) You must provide Atari with three copies of each of your products (hardware developers should contact us directly if the cost is prohibitive.) One of the copies is used by Atari for compatibility testing on new equipment, another copy goes into the Atari archives, and the last copy is for Atari's internal use.
- 5) You must make additional copies of your products available to Atari at dealer cost.
- 6) You must re-register annually (currently, no charge).

Benefits from this program include the following:

- 1) The ST/TT Developer's Kit with updates
- 2) The "Resource File" developer newsletter
- 3) Access to ATARI.RSC, the Atari Developer Roundtable on GENie. We strongly urge you to take advantage of the support that we offer on GENie. It is the primary source of information regarding updates and trends in the Atari environment.
- 4) Online technical support
- 5) Telephone technical support
- 6) Early access to new Atari products
- 7) Product compatibility testing for TOS owners
- 8) Marketing databases (owners, press, user groups, developers)

- 9) Internationalization assistance
- 10) Opportunities for bundling
- 11) Opportunities for co-marketing
- 12) Discounts on Atari products

To be an active Tier 2 developer
you must fulfill the following requirements:

- 1) You must register with the Tier 2 group. This consists of paying the \$125.00 registration fee, completing the Application form, and executing the Non-disclosure form.
- 2) You must re-register annually. This consists of paying a \$50. renewal fee for continuing developer kit upgrades and GENie support.
- 3) In the event that it becomes your desire to join Tier 1 of the Atari Developers Group, you must pay the difference in the registration fees, and complete the requirements outlined for Tier 1 developers.

Benefits from this program include the following:

- 1) The ST/TT Developer Kit with updates
- 2) Access to a Tier 2 Developer category on GENie in the ST Roundtable

If your circumstances are unique, and you feel that you don't quite fit into either tier, please send us a letter describing your situation. We will do our best to adapt to your needs.

> SINCERE DEALERS? STR FOCUSâ € "HURRAY FOR ME, TO HELL WITH THEE."
=====

"THE REAL DEAL"
=====

by Lloyd E. Pulley

"Hurray for me, to hell with thee." How apropos that passage seems in todays ST market. While Atari struggles to make radical changes in its product distribution network and breathe life back into the US ST market, there are a few vocal dissidents that wish to keep the status quo and maintain their monopolistic strangle-hold on their local markets. Atari is attempting to resuscitate a market that is on its last gasps while these few wish to continue their practice of leaching of the patient.

For you who are scratching your heads and wondering what Lloyd is ranting and raving about this time, let me explain. Recently Atari announced it was going to go back to using distributors and was also going to put the 1040STe into mass market i.e., Sears, Wards, Kmart, etc. The distributors and mass market would be limited to the "low end" systems while the full service dealers would be the only ones that could get the TT and laser printers. Some of the more vocal dealers started screaming "this will drive us out of business, we can't compete against the mail order houses and mass marketers". At first glance, their complaints seem reasonable, but let's take a closer look. (For the rest of this article, I'll use the term "mail order" to include mail order, "low ball" dealers and mass marketers.)

Three years ago, these "verbal few" (or ones just like them) told Atari that if the ST was taken away from the mail order houses, "low ball" dealers, and the mass marketers, then the legitimate dealers could make money, they could reach the non-game customers and their sales would increase. Atari bowed to their pressure and made the ST "dealer only". Now here it is three years later and what do we have? ST sales in the US are almost non-existent, we've dropped from approximately 300 dealers down to 40-60, and the users and developers are leaving the ST market in droves. But these "verbal few" are up in arms over the idea that Atari might try to change things for the better (anything would be better than we what we have today).

These "verbal few" attempt to tell us that prospective customers may get turned off by seeing a mail-order advertisement for an Atari product at a cheap price because it will make him think that the ST is a "cheap" or "incompetent" machine. If that is true, then why do businesses buy MILLIONS of IBM's/clones each year. You can't pick up a newspaper or computer magazine without seeing 100's of mail-order advertisements for these systems, but yet they don't seem to have problems with the "cheap" or "incompetent" image and still manage to sell to professionals.

These "verbal few" also attempt to tell us that customers won't buy from local dealers once they've been introduced to heavily discounted mail-order pricing. Or that new dealers won't want to take on the Atari line if they see it heavily discounted. Again, I wonder if these folks have ever picked up a newspaper or computer magazine and seen the prices quoted for Macs and PC/clones? There are "umpteen" Mac and PC/clone dealers in every town and more waiting in line to get a chance to carry the lines. Even when the ST was sold via mail-order, there were five times as many dealers as there are today. It was after mail order was stopped that these dealers either went out of business or dropped the ST line.

Why is it that stores that carry competitive systems can compete against mail order, can sell to professionals and businesses in spite of mail order, and can stay in business and support their customers even though mail-order thrives in their market places? Is it because all of these dealers are "fly by night" (as the "vocal few" would like you to

believe) and won't be around to service their "cheap" products? In some cases, that's true. But in the majority of the cases, it's not true. Dealers that sell name-brands and at full retail go out of business just as much as the ones who have "cheap" prices. Can it be that professional people will only buy name brands and from stores that can give service (again, the "vocal few" would like to believe that)? No, there's more "clones" and "cheap" computers in businesses than there are _real_ IBM's. Can it be that the dealers who sell "cheap" don't give good service? Nope! I've gotten good and bad service from dealers who charge full retail and dealers who sell "cheaply". As a matter of fact, I've found the full retail salespeople to be a little less computer literate and a little more sales orientated than the "cheap" dealers (I guess to sell full retail, it's better if you can sell the "sizzle" and not the "steak").

So what's the secret? There is no secret, it's public knowledge. What worked five years ago doesn't work today. In today's marketplace, businesses have to learn to be competitive, competitive price-wise and service-wise. The dealers that take advantage of the situation will prosper, the ones that whine and cry will go out of business.

There are many ways to take advantage of the situation. One is to work with the mass marketers. A year or so ago, Atari dumped a bunch of 520 packages in the Price Club stores (Price Club is a wholesale/ membership store). They were selling the system with the packaged soft-ware cheaper than my local dealer could buy them for. So what did he do? He and I went to the local Price Clubs and showed their salespeople how to sell the systems!! He didn't make any money from the sale of the initial system, he made his money from the referrals the Price Club sales people sent his way. Price Club only sold the system, nothing else. So they sent their customers to him for additional software and hardware. Price Club got the initial sale (at a low profit), Atari got to handle the warranty hassles and he got the profit from all of the after market sales.

You ask, "wouldn't these people have bought from him at full retail if Price Club hadn't been "low balling" the system"? No...for a couple of reasons. One, the majority of the people who bought these systems from Price Club had never heard of the ST (or his store). The only reason they knew about it was because they saw it in Price Club. Two, in general, the type of people that buy from stores like Price Club (mail order, mass market, etc) don't buy from stores that sell at full retail. These are people that are looking for a "deal".

This leads me right into my next point...the additional exposure that a system gets in a mass market store. Currently, Commodore is selling the A500 in Wards. There are 1,000's of people walking through a Wards store everyday seeing that system. The vast majority of these people have never heard of an Amiga before (the only system less well known to the general public than the Amiga is the ST). But people start to recognize the brand name and look for it elsewhere. One of the places they will look will be their local dealer. Not all customers are price shoppers, many will pay extra for the dealers' support and expertise. If a dealer only gets to see 10% of the people that have seen the system in mass marketers and from mail order houses, that will 10-20 times more than he's currently seeing. A good dealer will increase his sales if a product is in a mass market store. More exposure, more sales.

You don't increase your sales by whining and crying over spilt milk. A real dealer grabs a glass and catches all of the milk he can! But these

"vocal few" can't realize that. They would rather try and upset "the apple cart" than learn to compete. Some of the suggestions that the "vocal few" have come up with? Here's four....

One, allow the mail-order and mass marketers to only carry the 520ST. First they complain because they don't want people to think of the ST as a game machine and a "cheapy", but they want to push a system that's almost six years old, isn't upgradable (easily) and doesn't have enough memory to handle many of today's applications (and some of the games). What kind of image will Atari project to the 1,000's of people that get stuck with one of these "lemons"? I don't think they'll want to buy any of the top-of-the-line products from Atari after that experience.

Two, only honor warranties on systems sold by legitimate dealers, i.e., dealers like themselves. This is another way to drive people into buying competitors systems.

Three, stop the spread of pricing talk on all national nets and on-line networks. According to them, this would allow individual dealers to set their own pricing to suit their individual needs. In other words, the dealer wouldn't have to be competitive and his customers wouldn't know any better.

Four, force Atari to set forth a clearcut list of dealer requirements and marketing guidelines for authorized dealerships. This is just another way of saying "price fixing". Any dealer who's prices are too low, as far as the "vocal few" are concerned, would somehow find that he'd violated a dealer requirement or marketing guideline and would get no more systems to sale.

None of the four above ideas talked about how to increase sales, they all talked of ways of limiting sales and/or competition.

At a time when Apple and IBM are realizing that the business market is starting to slow down and want to get more into home computer market these "vocal few" want to alienate the personal computer buyer and concentrate on the "professional" businesses. Don't they know that Apple has sold more of their low-end Classics in the six months of its existence than Atari has sold ST's in the US in the whole 5 1/2 years that they've been available? Don't they realize that there was Apple dealers "low balling" the Classic from the 1st day it appeared but that hasn't slowed the sales for the real dealers (Apple is 3 months behind production schedules).

At a time when Apple, who has 1,000's of full line dealers, is starting to expand into lowcost, high volume electronics stores and warehouses that will be required to give only minimal support, these "vocal few" want a "closed shop" and want to lock out the mass marketers and mail order houses.

I think someone needs to tell these "vocal few" that this is 1991 and not 1985. You have to change with the times if you want to stay in business.

THE LIFE & TIMES OF THE 68000 CPU
=====

Part III

by Brian Converse

What Motorola could have done was to drench IBM with every kind of support known to man and beast. IBM was partial to the 68000 'vision', as is evident from their later interest in the chip for other projects. But Motorola's effort would have needed to be extreme to counteract the popular vision of how they were marketing the 68000. It was a disaster. There were notable 'wins' as the Sun and Apollo workstations became popular. Despite a discouraging level of support from the manufacturer, many 'embedded' industrial computers used the powerful, easy to program 68000. Year after year, however, Intel produced more 80x86 chips.

The real strategy in semiconductors is volume. RISC proponents will tell you that these simple, easy to produce chips are cheaper. Unfortunately, the major cost in semiconductors is the design and the fab. Chip designers are not cheap; computers can help, but can't do it alone; microcomputers cannot be designed 'yesterday'. The RISC proponents will concede this point; if you point out that a microcomputer chip fabrication facility ('fab') may cost \$50 million US or more, they point out that you can contract that out. No matter how the fab is done, costs go down with volume. If you only sell 1000 chips per month, you'll never see the 'advantage' of your cheaper to produce design. Pretty soon, too, you'll have to match competitors with a NEW design, and that will cost you money. Each new improvement in production of chips involves enormous costs as chip-makers switch over to an entire new set of machines; each generation costs more than the last. Currently, the most advanced 'sub micron' fabs cost over \$100 million US. In 3 years, you'll need another generation, and it'll cost even more! Due to the enormous success of the PC, Intel can better afford these enormous costs.

Motorola's early marketing strategy is now beginning to hurt badly. Year after year is proclaimed to be 'the year of UNIX', but not many UNIX machines are sold. Sun and other workstation vendors are highly profitable and successful, but all the UNIX based machines sold in a year do not compare well to, say, the month's sales at Compaq. High volume PC clone makers like Dell and Gateway are probably now investigating machinery used by M&M Mars or General Mills' breakfast cereal divisions. Most of these machines contain an Intel chip. Motorola has succeeded in many areas than just UNIX boxes. The 'A' machines: Apple Mac/Atari ST/Commodore Amiga are examples. Most laser printers use a 68000 controller. The basic 68000 chip used in the ST, Amiga, and Mac is now only \$5 in modest quantities.

The Intel 80x86 chips have a good head start. Even if the 68000 or

68030 were FREE, there is a horrible software deficit. 68000 machines have made solid inroads in desktop publishing, graphical (Mac style) operating systems, MIDI music, and UNIX realms. In general terms, however, there is an order of magnitude more software available for the Intel chips than the 68000 and the surfeit verges on TWO orders of magnitude! That the 68000 is spiffy inside the chip or wonderfully easy to program is of little comfort to the user who cannot run Autocad on his Amiga. This part of the game belongs to the computer companies; there is little Motorola can do directly to make more software appear for the 68000. One hopes that they move heaven and earth to help the remaining 68000 based computer makers, especially those like Atari with pricing aggressive enough to generate volume. More volume means more chips means cheaper chips means more profit means enough money to build that next fab and 680x0 chip without going into the red. Since August, Motorola stock has dropped twice on volume due to bad earnings projections.

.....continued in next week's issue

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